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Access for All: Breaking Barriers in Autism Diagnosis and Treatment

Hello, my name is Marlene, and I am here to share the difficult journey I faced in pursuing an autism diagnosis for my child. This journey was fraught with challenges, from navigating complex healthcare systems to facing long waiting times and limited access to specialists. The process highlighted a significant issue: the importance of access for all is not always a reality for everyone.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) are crucial in ensuring that every individual receives the treatment and support they need. Despite the availability of advanced therapies and interventions, many families like mine struggle to reach these resources due to systemic barriers and inequities.

In my talk, I will discuss the emotional and practical hurdles we encountered, emphasizing the need for a more inclusive approach to healthcare. By sharing my personal experiences, I hope to shed light on the gaps in the current system and advocate for changes that will make advanced therapies and support services accessible to all families, regardless of their background or circumstances.

Together, we can work towards a future where every child with autism, and indeed every individual with a rare disease, receives timely, effective, and equitable care.

Biography

Marlene As a disabled Latina who has overcome obstacles, from teen parenting to careers and then disability, when I thought things couldn't get worse, my son was born with an ultra rare disease and has numerous medical conditions including Autism. I took my pain and created a path by returning to school, started writing books, and now I am a published author of six books. I also founded Helping Swans Co., a nonprofit that raises disability acceptance providing support, resources for families in underserved communities

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